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ABSTRACT

A brief questionnaire was mailed to all legislators in Arkansas (n=135, with 75 responding) and Texas (n=181 with 67 responding) concerning possible gender differences in legislative effectiveness. Personal interviews were also conducted with all female legislators from both states and an equal number of randomly selected male legislators (20 in Arkansas, 40 in Texas). Contextual factors, including the professionalism, proportion of women members, partisanship, and institutional power structure found in state legislatures, facilitate or impede the effectiveness of women relative to men. While current trends toward increasing professionalism and proportions of women in state legislatures appear to benefit women, patterns of partisan activity and the institutional power structures are mixed or situation-specific in their impact. The institutional power structures of both states, where women are proportionally represented below the national average, do more to impede than to facilitate women's internal influence. Two factors, however, seem auspicious for women's increased future effectiveness. First, the trend toward more professionalism and less personalism in state legislative operations has not yet abated, and this trend is generally beneficial to women. Second, women legislators are themselves optimistic about their present effectiveness and future power potential. The document includes two tables and an 18-item bibliography. (JB)

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GENDER DIFFERENCES IN LEGISLATIVE EFFECTIVENESS

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GENDER DIFFERENCES IN LEGISLATIVE EFFECTIVENESS

Jeanie R. Stanley and Diane D. Blair

During the past year, data has been collected through mailed questionnaires and personal interviews with legislators and lobbyists in Texas and Arkansas concerning possible gender differences in legislative effectiveness.[1] After making certain methodological observations about our research, we analyze the impact of legislative institutional and cultural norms on gender differences in legislative effectiveness. Although this is a preliminary analysis, our findings suggest the importance of contextual factors on the impact of women in office.

Methodological Observations

A brief self-administered questionnaire was mailed to all legislators in Arkansas (135) and Texas (181). The current response rate (75 AR; 67 TX) is low for several reasons:

1) Many legislators have an aversion to completing surveys. The higher Arkansas response was attributed to sponsoring letters from key legislators; to mention of our study's association with the highly regarded (because of previous assistance to the Arkansas

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1. The authors wish to express their appreciation of the financial and staff support provided by the Center for the American Woman and Politics, The University of Texas at Tyler, The University of Arkansas, Arkansas Senator David Malone, Arkansas Representative John Miller, and Texas State Representative David Hudson and his staff. The authors also wish to acknowledge the assistance in data collection and analysis of Kimberly Johnson, Mary Elizabeth Jackson and Shari Koukl.

legislature) Eagleton Institute; and to Blair's "insider" status as a legislative/lobbyist spouse. Although sponsoring letters from other legislators have boosted Stanley's later responses, many legislators have a personal policy of discarding surveys.

2) The questionnaires initially were mailed in late November, 1988, to arrive after the election and before the hectic biennial sessions which begin in January in both states. Unfortunately, other surveys from constituent groups arrived at the same time.

3) Many legislators are pressed for time. As both Arkansas and Texas pay minimal salaries ($7500 and $7200 respectively), most legislators must combine private and public careers. The months around elections and during legislative sessions are extraordinarily busy. Academic surveys are rarely given a high priority. As the questionnaire presumed participation in at least one session, and as Texas had a relatively high turnover, over 15% of the questionnaires could not be sent until the end of the regular session. The regular session was followed a month later with a special session which did not finish until July 19. It is hoped that a final (third) mailing will yield additional responses.

4) Although we tried to minimize the length of the questionnaire, its length may have reduced the response rate.

Recommendation: Our experience suggests that questionnaires should be mailed with a letter from a colleague requesting the legislator's response. An endorsing letter from a legislator may also boost lobbyist participation. Had our research deadline been

more flexible, the questionnaires might have been mailed a few months after the session. Questionnaires should be made as short as possible. Neither legislators nor lobbyists bothered to complete most of the open-ended items.

The personal interviews were difficult to obtain and sometimes of questionable quality. Our research design necessitated personal interviews with all female legislators in both Arkansas and Texas, an equal number of male legislators (randomly selected), and with legislative leaders in both states: a total of 60 legislative interviews (20 in AR, 40 in TX). As the cost of travelling throughout the state to interview legislators in their home districts was clearly prohibitive, interviews were scheduled during the brief biennial sessions (January - March for Arkansas; January - June for Texas). While this "solved" one logistical problem, it created others.

In Arkansas, Senators share one small room with a colleague, and Representatives have no office at all. Therefore, interviews had to be conducted in a semi-public and frequently noisy atmosphere -- in assorted rooms adjoining the chamber (with floor proceedings being broadcast and the interviewee often rushing out to vote), on the chamber floor before or after the day's business (with colleagues kibitzing throughout), in crowded corridors, etc. Taping of most Arkansas interviews was impossible due to the background noise.

Texas legislators have office and staff, but appointments in both states were difficult to obtain and often cancelled due to

last minute legislative schedule changes. Referrals from other legislators or staff were necessary to obtain some Texas appointments. It was not unusual for interviewers in both states to have several interviews cancelled per day. Protocol required the appointments, but most interviews were obtained by waiting in Texas offices or standing outside the Arkansas chamber doors for several hours. Most interviews were short; legislators or their staff rarely would agree to more than 15 minutes. Once the interview began, however, several legislators spent up to an hour, and those few conducted in the legislators' districts after the session usually ran more than an hour.

Recommendation: Obviously, interviews when the legislature is not in session would be preferable to those during the session, and interviews earlier in the session generally will be better than those near the end. Using interviewers who live in the capital city would reduce travel costs and waiting time. Conversely, the qualitative research is enhanced by both the additional time spent in participant observation of the legislative institution and process (while waiting for interviews) and the involvement of the principal researchers. Certainly, our own experiences with frenzied (and occasionally hazardous) travel to and from the capital while simultaneously fulfilling teaching and family responsibilities deepened our appreciation of the strenuous demands on those who serve in "part-time" legislative bodies.

The small female sample size is problematic, but further questionnaire responses are still expected in Texas; we did secure interviews with all but one woman legislator in Texas and one in Arkansas; it was a deliberate part of our research rationale to focus on states with small numbers of women legislators.

Most previous studies of women legislators have been based on exceptionally effective women lawmakers (Kirkpatrick, 1974) or on women in legislatures with exceptionally large numbers of female members (Mueller, 1984). In contrast, our interviews include almost all of the women, of varying degrees of experience and effectiveness, in two state legislatures in which women are proportionally represented below the national average. Women constitute 6.6% of the Arkansas legislature in 1989 and 10.5% of the Texas legislature. The national average is 16.9% (CAWP, 1989). As Ruth Mandel (1981) observed, the positive changes which the female perspective might bring to public policy making "cannot come from a few isolated, overburdened, exceptional women." Some of our women are not outstanding or exceptional, but their experience is similar to that of many women currently serving in legislative bodies across the nation.

Legislative effectiveness requires the development and use of interpersonal power. Our collection of data from both men and women legislators and lobbyists permits essential comparisons. The relational and perceptual nature of legislative power provides additional justification for the study of the institutional and normative context in which the legislators operate.

Institutional and Behavioral Norms of State Legislatures: Ramifications for Women Legislators

In 1971, the Citizens Conference on State Legislatures ranked the Texas legislature 38th and the Arkansas legislature 44th, in terms of legislative capabilities. While both bodies have been improved since that time, their professionalism is weakened by their short biennial sessions, relatively low salaries, and, in the case of Arkansas, inadequate staffing. Our findings suggest that professional legislatures are, on balance, more conducive to the advancement of women.[2] The marginal differences in the number of women legislators have some impact with increasing numbers associated with increased informal networking, but women in neither legislature have passed the critical threshold of minority status (Kanter; Mueller; Saint-Germaine). Similarly, the impact of differences in partisanship, though not dramatic, may inhibit networking among women legislators. The effects of differences in the institutional power structure are unclear. Although the Arkansas seniority criterion for committee positions precludes gender bias, both the Arkansas seniority and the Texas leadership dominant power structures currently work against women.

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2. We do not identify professionalism with salary alone. Rather, we consider differences in the staff and other resource support for legislators, the seriousness with which legislators regard their work, the amount of time spent on legislative work during or between sessions, etc. See Bowman and Kearny (1988) for a discussion of a multivariate measure of government capability.

PROFESSIONAL LEGISLATURES AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WOMEN

Blair's (1988, p. 161) description of the Arkansas General Assembly prior to the reforms of 1973 is similar to frequently critical accounts of the Texas Legislature during the same period.

> Each new term brought a large proportion of newcomers who wandered in bewilderment through a raucous and undisciplined atmosphere in which lobbyists swarmed on the chamber floors (and frequently joined in the voting), bills were scheduled or buried at the whim through mysterious manipulations, committees and committee assignments were so numerous as to be meaningless,a nd whatever real business the legislature accomplished was worked out in late-night (and frequently liquorish) sessions in downtown hotel rooms.

Willie Morris (1964) gave the following report of a Texas session:

> One night, in a bitter floor debate in the lower house, one legislator pulled the cord out of the amplifier system, another hit him from the blindside with a tackle; there was mass pushing, hitting, clawing, and exchanges about one another's wives, mistresses, and forbears. Sweethearts and wives, who were allowed on the floor with friends and secretaries cowered near the desks. In the middle of the brawl, a barbershop quartet of legislators quickly formed at the front of the chamber and, like a dance band during a saloon fight, sang, "I Had a Dream, Dear."

Reforms made in both legislatures in the early 1970's, the "new breed" of legislator (younger, more urban, better educated) associated with the reapportionment revolution, as well as serious economic and policy difficulties, have resulted in a much more dignified and serious legislative process. An occasional hog call in Arkansas or fist fight in Texas is the exception, not the rule. Legislators are markedly more devoted to their responsibilities (Blair, 163). While the impact and largesse of lobbyists remain evident, most legislators are more likely to spend their evenings

pouring over legislative business than pouring down drinks in hotel bars. Although it has been reported that the "central watering holes" of Little Rock and Austin have simply been replaced by exclusive clubs to ensure privacy from the press, most observers suggest that the fraternity like atmosphere is gone and, as a result, the legislatures are more efficient (Walter, 1988). Sam Kinch Jr., editor of Texas Weekly in Austin notes, "It's a much more strait-laced, less loosey-goosey bunch ... this bunch is serious, and spends their time working and not partying" (Walters, 1989).

This more professional style of legislating and lobbying is more conducive to women legislators' participation. Although some women legislators consciously make an effort to play golf, hunt, or drink with legislators and lobbyists during social events, most women and many men prefer to conduct legislative business during committee meetings or in one-on-one conversations. When asked to evaluate the importance of various factors in achieving legislative effectiveness, legislators and particularly women legislators, rated "doing one's homework," developing subject matter expertise, and spending a lot of time on legislative work as more important than using social occasions as opportunities to conduct legislative business or having good relations with strong lobbyists (Table 1).

Lobbyists have changed their approach appropriate to the more professional, independent legislator. Political Action Committees and campaign donations have largely replaced lavish entertainment, evenings of "booze and broads," and junket trips during legislative

sessions. This is not to suggest, however, that certain perks, as well as sponsorship of key legislation, are not offered to high ranking men that are not given to the generally lower ranking women. During the 1989 five month Texas regular session, for example, 808 registered lobbyists in Texas spent $1.8 million on entertainment and gifts for Texas lawmakers and an additional $427,357 on related advertising and direct mail (Copelin and Ward). Over one-third of the expenditures, however, were made by only 26 lobbyists, primarily representing big business interests and trial lawyers. Few women were included in their largesse. The greater female consciousness of discrimination noted by Antolini (1984) may account for the higher importance women attach to strong lobbyists relations in comparison with men (Table 1). After news accounts of lobbyist paid trips to Colorado and Europe for several male legislators, Texas Representative Lena Guerrero remarked, "A very large percentage of the House doesn't get to go on trips, so they are saying 'What trips?' Nobody said to me, "Let's go skiing.'" Guerrero said women lawmakers get few perks from the good-old-boy political network. Her major benefit, she said, is a card entitling her to La Quinta motel rooms for $25 a night.

Women fare better with the more information-oriented forms of lobbying. The new high tech lobbyists, armed with cellular phones; portable fax machines, and computers filled with voting records and grassroots information, work to persuade most legislators on the

TABLE 1: FACTORS IMPORTANT TO LEGISLATIVE EFFECTIVENESS
1989 ARKANSAS AND TEXAS LEGISLATORS[3]

Factor	Mean Responses By State And Gender (1 Not Important - 5 Very Important) Arkansas	Texas	Male	Female
Subject Matter Expertise	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.9
Spending Time on Legislative Work	3.8*	3.5*	3.6	3.9
Doing One's Homework	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.5
Using Social Occasions as Opportunities to Conduct Legislative Business	2.4	2.6	2.4	2.8
Having Good Relations with Strong Lobbyists	2.9	2.9	2.8	3.2
Having an Effective Staff	3.1*	4.4*	3.6	4.0
Having a Supportive Family	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.8
Serving on a Powerful Committee	3.9	3.8	3.8	4.1
Chairing a Committee	3.9	3.8	3.8	4.2
Ranking High in Seniority	4.0*	2.8*	3.4	3.5
Having Close Ties to Legislative Leaders	3.6*	4.0*	3.7*	4.3*
Working Closely with One's Political Party	1.5*	2.2*	1.9	1.8

N = TX (67); AR (75); Males (125); Females (17).
*p = .04

[3]. Legislators were asked to rank the importance to legislative effectiveness of 26 factors, drawn from the literature. The 12 factors analyzed here relate to institutional structure and environment. The other 14 relate more to personal background and relationships and will be analyzed, together with the insights drawn from our personal interviews, in a future research paper.

basis of substantive information (Reyes and Kilday, 1987). Teams of lobbyists are assembled on major issues and assigned to specific legislators based on common interests, personality types, sex, and ethnicity. Both Arkansas and Texas have increasing numbers of women lobbyists. Although more women lobbyists work for less prestigious and lower paying clients (including consumer interests, family violence, etc.) than for prestigious, high dollar business clients, Texas women legislators and lobbyists suggest that the involvement of women lobbyists facilitates the advancement of women legislators.

The increased number of women staff members, particularly those in higher ranking positions, similarly eases the job of women legislators. Texas, following national trends in the 1970's and early 1980's toward increased resource support for legislators and decentralized hiring of staff, provides funds for two to four staff members per legislator (Book of States, 82-83). With a total staff of 1809, Texas has the fourth largest staff among state legislatures in 1988 (Weberg). In contrast, Arkansas has a total of 301-400, mostly clerical, none of which are hired by individual legislators. Texas legislators rate the importance of having an effective staff significantly higher than do Arkansas legislators (Tau C=-.60; p=.00). Women in both states rank staff as more important than do their male cohorts (Table 1). These gender differences may reflect the fact that women legislators take a no-nonsense, issue-specific orientation toward their responsibilities and recognize the numerous advantages which competent staff support

can supply in advancing their issues. They may also reflect the higher proportion of females within the staff than in the legislature, as well as the perception that female staff, lobbyists, and legislators share an informal bond.

Whereas women held primarily secretarial jobs in earlier years, in Texas they now act as primary aids for representatives and senators. Several Texas women legislators described an unstructured women's network of support among women legislators, lobbyists, and staff members. At least three current women legislators formerly were staff members or lobbyists. Although the proportion of female membership in the legislatures has not increased dramatically, the increase in the proportion of female lobbyists and key legislative staff has been far greater, thereby providing an environment in which the presence of women is not seen as so exceptional and unusual. More than one woman lobbyist attributed the faster increase in female lobbyists to the strain that a legislator's job puts on the family.

Previous studies have suggested that family responsibilities are more likely to keep women than men from running for legislative office (Carroll, 129-130), and it is noteworthy that only one of Arkansas' women legislators with a non-Little Rock residence served while her children were young. However, male and female legislators responded similarly to our inquiries about the strain of their job on the family and the importance of family support (Table 1). There were no significant gender differences in the

number of legislators with pre-school or school age children. Male and female legislators agree that legislative life puts a strain on families and highly value the importance of family support to legislative effectiveness. Whereas women talk of missing bedtime and lessons, however, men more often speak of financial difficulties. Men are significantly more likely to provide over two-thirds of their family's income (Table 2). The low salaries provided by both states results in family strain for legislators who are principal income providers without great personal wealth. More professional legislatures address the income strain on families; none of our legislators suggested ways to address strains resulting from absence. Several women legislators reported personal strategies of maximizing work productivity during their hours in the capitol, minimizing social activities, and using air travel to increase the number of nights at home. All these strategies are more feasible in professional legislatures. Ironically, one unprofessional characteristic of the Texas and Arkansas bodies, their short biennial sessions, may work to facilitate family relations.

Although the increased professionalism in the Arkansas and Texas legislatures generally appears to have had a positive impact on the effectiveness of women legislators, the proportion of women members has remained small in both states. Patterns of interaction among women legislators vary according to their numbers.

TABLE 2: LEGISLATOR'S PROVISION OF FAMILY INCOME
ARKANSAS AND TEXAS LEGISLATORS, 1989

Portion of Income Provided by Legislature	Males			Females		
	AR	TX	ALL	AR	TX	ALL
Less Than a Third	0%	2%	1%	25%	63%	44%
More Than One-Third Less Than Two-Thirds	22%	23%	22%	25%	13%	19%
More than Two-Thirds; Less Than 100%	35%	25%	31%	25%	0%	13%
100%	43%	51%	47%	25%	25%	25%

N=225 (Males) 17 (Females) AR (75) TX (67)
AR (Tau C = -.14; p =.04); TX (Tau C = -.27; p=.00)
Total (Tau C = -.19; p=.00)

THE PROPORTION OF WOMEN IN STATE LEGISLATURES

With 6.6% and 10.5% female membership respectively, women in the Arkansas General Assembly and the Texas Legislature would be categorized by Kanter (1977) as a "skewed" group, one which has negative connotations for the minority ("token") members (Saint-Germaine, 1989). Women legislators in such small minorities are likely to work out relationships with their colleagues individually rather than collectively (Mueller, 1984; Kanter, 1977; Saint-Germaine, 1989). Also confirming previous findings that very small numbers may enhance a sense of vulnerability (Mueller, 1984), several of the Arkansas women interviewed noted that anytime they seemed to be "getting their heads together," male colleagues expressed great curiosity (and some discomfort) about what the

women might be "plotting." And given the strong distaste several male legislators expressed for the tendency of the even smaller black minority to "bloc" vote, the women's perception that collective efforts could be counter-productive may well be accurate. As one women noted, even on the House Education Committee, which has the most women of any standing committee, women still have only four votes out of 20. The Arkansas women legislators have very occasionally attempted a lunch together, or an evening out, and a few enjoy close personal relationships, but they have avoided either the reality or the appearance of constituting a women's caucus.

The slightly greater numbers of women in Texas may account for reported informal networking. Several of the Texas female representatives meet for lunch each Thursday. Although lobbyists usually pay for the lunch, lobbyists and male legislators generally are not invited. However, women legislators quickly disclaim any suggestion that the luncheons constitute a caucus. For some, the luncheons provide a place to relax and visit. Although one newly elected representative thought the luncheons a waste of time because few issues were discussed, other more experienced members said that the exchange of information and personal interaction result in unconscious bonding. The ideological diversity of women members precludes agreement on much legislation, but women avoid "cutting each other up" on the floor because of earlier discussions over lunch. In certain instances, women coalesce behind an issue or in support of another female legislator. Although most male

legislators do not perceive the women working together as a group, one male leader grinned and said that about three times during a regular session he would see the women lining up behind the mike and he knew he was in trouble.

The Arkansas women also take pains to avoid denigrating each other, and several recalled instances of rallying around a sister legislator who was being unfairly treated. Indeed, at one point in the 1989 session when a generally popular legislator (who had been repeatedly warned previously about his sexist language) closed his plea for a bill's passage with "Gentlemen, this is a good bill," all but one of the women of the House voted against it - in a rare display of feminist temper.[4] Although the Arkansas women run the gamut of political ideology, these and other episodes suggest the existence of "closet feminists" (Antolini, 1984).

Mueller (1984) cites partisanship as a second major factor besides proportion of female membership which influences the pattern of female member interaction. Differences in the partisan activity within the Arkansas and Texas legislatures are illustrative.

PARTISANSHIP AND WOMEN IN STATE LEGISLATURES

Whereas Republicans remain almost too few to be noticeable in the Arkansas legislature (9 of 100 in the House; 4 of 35 in the

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[4]. Ironically, one woman legislator attributed this solidarity to a heightened sense of female consciousness resulting from Blair's interviews - ironic because Blair's son was involved as a proponent of the bill.

Senate), Republicans now hold 39% (59 of 150) of the Texas House and 26% (8 of 31) of the Senate. With the exception of Republican Party efforts to recruit candidates, political parties in Arkansas have had minimal impact on the legislative process (Blair, 1988). This sharply contrasts with the increasingly partisan activity in the Texas legislature.

Although Texas legislators evaluate relations with political parties as significantly more important than Arkansas legislators (Table 1), both the Texas House and Senate are dominated by nonpartisan leadership. The Speaker and Lt. Governor are Democrats but appoint Republican committee chairs and make key appointments roughly equivalent to the GOP proportion of membership. Despite criticism from legislative leadership, however, partisan activity has steadily increased in recent sessions.

The House Democratic Caucus was formed in 1981 with 37 members. Many conservative Democrats, however, joined Republicans in the Texas Conservative Coalition. As Republican strength increased, more Democrats became active in the party caucus. A Senate Democratic Caucus was formed and both chambers have Democratic Campaign Committees. In 1989 the Republicans formed a Republican Caucus in the House, and the Conservative Coalition has largely ceased to function.

Mueller (1984) finds that strong party organizations in state legislatures, in addition to a small proportion of female membership and ideological conservatism, inhibit the formation of women's caucuses. Because of the particular issue orientation of

Republican candidate recruitment (including a "pro-life" or anti-abortion stance), the growing partisan tenor in the Texas legislature is more likely to inhibit the participation of Republican women in women's networking than Democratic women. The Texas Republican Party actively recruits candidates and guarantees substantial financial support (over $30,000 per legislative candidate for a total of $600,000 from the state party alone in 1988). There is some suggestion that incumbents who do not follow party line voting will be disciplined by withdrawal of financial support. One incumbent Republican female representative who voted with the Speaker and most Democrats for increased taxes during the 1987 session, for example, was defeated in 1988 after receiving less than enthusiastic support from the state party. Newly elected Republicans, recruited as party loyalists, are expected to be more partisan and active in the party caucus. First term Republican women House members spoke positively about the information and assistance they received at the weekly Republican Caucus breakfasts.

At this time, despite increasing partisan activity in the Texas legislature, political parties do not control the key prerequisites to legislative power in Arkansas and Texas. Although the states have different institutional power structures, both currently work against women.

THE INSTITUTIONAL POWER STRUCTURE AND WOMEN LEGISLATORS

In keeping with national trends toward a decentralization of power in state legislatures, the role of committees and their chairs is increasingly important (Book of States, 1988-89; Keefe and Ogul, 1989). Both Arkansas and Texas legislators recognize committee assignments and chairmanships as critical to their legislative effectiveness (Table 1). The criteria by which they obtain these positions, however, are quite different. In Arkansas, seniority determines committee assignments and chairmanships. Each representative and senator is entitled to two standing committee assignments, one A committee and one B committee, and requests for committees are honored strictly on the basis of seniority. (When entering the legislature, each member of the freshman class draws lots which determine his or her seniority ad infinitum.) Chairmanships in turn are determined strictly on the basis of seniority on that particular committee.

Seniority is only one criterion which the Texas Speaker and Lt. Governor consider in making their committee assignments. Although approximately one half of most standing committee positions in the Texas House and Senate are assigned according to seniority, the remaining positions and all committee chairs and members of procedural, conference, and interim committees are determined by the Speaker and Lt. Governor. Differences in the importance of seniority are reflected in the Arkansas legislators' significantly higher ranking of this criterion in Table 1 (Tau C =.58; p= .00).

Seniority, though objective in its application to male and female members, works against women in both states because they do not, for the most part, have it. In Arkansas, over a third of the men have served 15 years or more, whereas none of the women have served over 14 years and most women legislators have served 5 years or less. Given the static ambitions of most Arkansas legislators and the very low rates of turnover, women are likely to wait many years for key committee positions (Blair, 1988). One Arkansas woman noted one advantage of this situation: senior members are gracious and generous in their "nurturing" of newcomers, including women, because they are so secure in their seniority-based power. However, given the extremely low turnover in the Arkansas legislature, women are still many years away from being able to exert the influence available to a chairman. Furthermore, membership on the much-prized Legislative Council (which turns into the Joint Budget Committee when the session begins) is also largely reserved for the most senior members, as is election to the Speakership of the House and the President Pro-temship of the Senate.

In Texas, ironically, women have achieved relative parity in seniority and the high turnover permits newly elected women to move up in seniority with relative ease. Seniority in Texas, however, pales in significance to being a member of the Speaker's "team" or the Lt. Governor's inner circle.

In the Texas House, women had 4 of 36 standing committee chair positions (Higher Education, Judicial Affairs, Judiciary, and

Public Education) and 3 vice chairs (Higher Education, Insurance, and State Affairs). In the Senate, where two of the three women have just completed their first term, no women serve as chairs or vice chairs of the regular standing committees. Although women hold more key positions on education and judiciary committees, this appears to reflect their prior experience and background more than gender stereotyping or discrimination (Carroll and Taylor, 1989).

The current Speaker and Lt. Governor in Texas gave similar criteria for their selection of committee positions: subject matter expertise, respect from colleagues, hard work, etc. The Lt. Governor claimed to be "gender blind" in making his assignments; women senators agreed.[5] Although the Speaker indicated he had no specific legislative agenda, several legislators said that one must agree to "carry the speaker's water" if one were to get key assignments. Most women (and some men) suggested other criteria for joining the Speaker's team which keep women from becoming "insiders." Members of the Speaker's team are likely to share his

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[5]. Lt. Governor, who was honored by the Texas Women's Political Caucus at the 1989 Texas Women's Legislative Days in the last year of his 18 year service (by choice), explained his lack of gender bias by commenting, "You have to understand me, where I came from, who my mother was." Oveta Culp Hobby was appointed as the first woman Parliamentarian of the Texas legislature at the age of 20. She ran unsuccessfully for the state legislature in 1930, married former Governor Hobby in 1931, served as President of the Texas League of Women Voters, and worked as a reporter and later manager/owner of the Houston Post and the KPRC radio and television stations. She was chosen by Franklin Roosevelt to head the women's section of the War Department's Bureau of Public Relations and later was put in charge of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, as a result of which she achieved the rank of colonel and was the first female recipient of the Distinguished Service Medal. Under Eisenhower, she was the first Secretary of HEW.

love of hunting, western dancing at the Broken Spoke, and various other leisure activities not likely to include women legislators. Although legislators and lobbyists characterized the previous speaker (until 1985) as more comfortable with women legislators and lobbyists than the current one, women have not been team members under either one, which explains their rating close ties to legislative leaders as significantly more important than men (Table 1).[6]

It should be made clear that while many of the women serving in both Arkansas and Texas are highly regarded by their male colleagues, and are deemed by the lobbyists we interviewed to be as (or more!) accomplished and knowledgeable as most of the male legislators, no woman in either legislature is consistently named by colleagues, lobbyists, or the press as being among the most influential inner circle. While these women are perfectly capable of providing constituent service and fulfilling their responsibilities as lawmakers, they are not yet in a position to establish legislative priorities, to reward and punish colleagues, and to have a consistent generalized impact on state policy and funding decisions. As one Arkansas lobbyist noted. there are not yet any women "whales."

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6. The significant differences between the total sample of men and women (Tau C =.15; p -.01) results form the significantly higher rating given by Texas women (Tau C =.21; p = .01). All Texas women legislators ranked this factor at 4 or 5.

Conclusion

Despite certain methodological problems associated with elite interviewing and the small female legislator sample, our research design, which permits comparative analysis of factors associated with gender differences in legislative effectiveness, is appropriate for studying the institutional context in which legislators must operate. Contextual factors, including the professionalism, proportion of women members, partisanship, and institutional power structure found in state legislatures, facilitate or impede the effectiveness of women relative to men. Whereas current trends toward increasing professionalism and proportions of women in state legislature appear to benefit women, patterns of partisan activity and the institutional power structures are mixed or situation specific in their impact.

It is discouraging to find that within the already problematic environments of the Arkansas and Texas legislatures (very few women, residual Southern resistance to non-traditional roles), two different institutional power structures do more to impede than to facilitate women's internal influence. Two factors, however, seem auspicious for women's increased future effectiveness in even inauspicious environments. First, the trend toward more professionalism and less personalism in state legislative operations has not yet abated, and this trend is generally beneficial to women. Second, as we will report in a future paper, our initial impression from numerous interviews with women

legislators is that they themselves are optimistic about their present effectiveness and future power potential.

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